

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Markup of H.R. 1254, the Presidential Libraries Donation Reform Act
March 8, 2007

I am pleased to bring up for Committee consideration H.R. 1254, the Presidential Libraries Donation Reform Act of 2007. This bill, which I introduced with Representatives Duncan, Clay, Platts, and Emanuel, would shine sunlight on donations to presidential libraries.

Under current law, presidents do not need to disclose any information about who gives to their libraries. Secret donations of unlimited size are allowed even while a president is still in office.

Presidential libraries keep getting more expensive, so presidential foundations need to raise more money to build them. The George H.W. Bush library was reported to cost more than \$80 million to build. The Clinton library and museum cost about \$165 million to build. News reports have indicated that the fundraising goal for President Bush's library is \$500 million.

The organizations raising money in support of these libraries often begin fundraising while the president remains in office. At a hearing last week, we heard from witnesses about the potential for corruption — both apparent and real — from organizations raising unlimited amounts of money from unidentified donors while a president remains in office.

Today's bill simply requires these fundraising organizations to disclose information about their donors to Congress and the National Archives during their period of most intense fundraising — while the President is in office and in the several years after the end of his term.

A bill similar to this was introduced by Mr. Duncan six years ago and received overwhelming support in the House. I hope that the Committee will approve this legislation today and bring it one step closer to becoming law.

I urge all members of the Committee to support the bill.